



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

ICE AGENTS ARREST 3 WOMEN CARRYING 28.3 LBS. OF HEROIN

The illegal drug is estimated to have a street value of more than \$1.3million

EL PASO, Texas — In two separate incidents this past weekend, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) special agents and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers arrested three women for attempting to smuggle 28.3 lbs. of white heroin into the United States.

Luz Elena Flores de Montes, a 41-year-old Mexican citizen, was intercepted by CBP officers Friday at the Paso Del Norte Bridge into the United States. Flores was found to have been carrying 8.8 lbs. of heroin strapped to her body. ICE special agents arrested Flores and initiated an investigation.

Later that evening, U.S. Border Patrol agents intercepted two women at the Sierra Blanca, Texas, checkpoint. The women, traveling in a bus bound for Dallas, were also found to have been carrying a total of 19.5 lbs. of heroin. The total street value of the entire 28.3 lbs. of the drug is more than \$1.3 million.

Angela Saenz-Sandoval, 39, a Mexican national, and Veronica Velasquez, 28, a U.S. citizen, were also arrested. All three women are charged with possession with intent to distribute a controlled substance, and knowingly and intentionally importing into the United States a controlled substance.

“Drug traffickers will go to great lengths to try to conceal their contraband,” said Keith J. Perniciaro, special agent-in-charge of the ICE El Paso office. “However, regardless of the concealment method, ICE and its law enforcement partners remain vigilant, and ready to detect narcotic shipments, and arrest perpetrators who think they can get past us.” Perniciaro heads the ICE El Paso Office of Investigations, which includes West Texas and the state of New Mexico.

This investigation is ongoing, and the women remain detained without bond at the El Paso County Jail awaiting a preliminary hearing in U.S. Magistrate Judge Michael McDonald’s court.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.